

Accessibility Subgroup

Vote Indiana Planning Team

March 14, 2003

Subgroup members present: Dax Denton (proxy for Dick Dodge), Dee Ann Hart, Suellen Jackson-Boner, Jon Laramore, Nick Rhoad, Kristi Robertson, Todd Rokita, Joe Ryan.
Facilitator: Anita Kolkmeier

Others present: Julia Vaughn (Count Us In), Mike Rothrock (Count Us In) Edelle Rothrock (Count Us In) and Jody Courtney

Each member received the minutes from the last meeting, and there were no additions or corrections. The following materials were distributed to members: Marion County polling place survey, Allen County polling place survey, Lake County polling place survey and the Indiana Election Division "Polling Place Accessibility in Indiana." Count Us In also distributed a folder which included: "Count Us In polling Place Accessibility Survey Results," "Poll Workers' Tip Sheet," "Voting in Indiana," "The Power of Words" and "Voting: A Constitutional Right for All Citizens."

Kristi Robertson began the discussion with what the subgroup must do for HAVA. Kristie said that we should consider the latest estimates of money and then break that down into the pots of money that we will use for the different pieces of the plan. Todd Rokita tasked his staff with getting that job done. In the mean time, Todd suggested that we try and get our priorities set anyway and then move forward from there. He asked the question "do our priorities really change depending on the amount of money?"

The subgroup then began discussing their priorities. Jon Laramore suggested that the "must do" priority should be accessibility of the voting equipment and polling place itself. Jon also suggested that education and the survey are possibilities that the subgroup "may do." The group continued the discussion to try to determine the preliminary priority. Todd also suggested the voting equipment as a top priority.

Suellen Jackson-Boner also brought up defining the terms by using the ADA and the survey of polling places. **Todd asked that the subgroup members bring a definition of accessibility to the next meeting so that the group could determine a consensus on this issue.**

The next question addressed was the value of a survey. **Julia Vaughn will bring to the group the cost of a survey at the next meeting.** Jon asked if we wanted to rely on information already done by the counties. He also pointed out that performing the surveys would make local officials cognizant of accessibility. Kristi said that under current law, the local officials are supposed to report inaccessible polling sites; however, many local officials do not report these because they do not know what they are supposed to do.

The group came to a consensus on a certification requirement. If local officials/counties want the money for equipment, then they need to certify accessibility. This process should involve members from the disability community working with the local officials. **Suellen is to submit all the ways that the Governor's Council can be involved with this. Suellen will also be delineating all the relevant Council services that would help election administrators for inclusion in the Plan.** Suellen is concerned with accountability of the local officials under the certification. **Kristi will check to see if using the incentive/certification violates HAVA in any way.** The group felt comfortable at this point that the general language allowed using the incentive but Kristi is going to double check.

Public comment was taken from Mike Rothrock, a representative of the community with a mobility disability. He explained the survey process that they used in Bartholomew County. They surveyed 61 out of 66 polling sites from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Election Day. Mike also addressed some of the costs involved. The survey that Mike performed had previously been submitted to the subgroup members.

Col. Ryan wants to insert certification language that will include the surrounding grounds of the polling place. The parking lots and signs must already be accessible, and that should be tied to the certification. The subgroup agreed.

Next the committee addressed the importance of training due to the lack of knowledge of poll workers regarding individuals with disabilities. This is an issue that the Training and Education Subgroup may want to address as well. The subgroup agreed that training regarding treatment of people with disabilities and the physical attributes of the polling place should be part of the certification required by local officials. For example, every inspector must watch a video about accessibility issues and treatment of voters with disabilities. Kristi pointed out that there should also be training for the individuals picking the polling places as well. The training should come from professional instructors, i.e. teachers.

The committee has agreed that Sarah can begin drafting the certification requirement of the plan.

The Accessibility Subgroup requests that the Training and Education Subgroup and Voting Equipment Subgroup review the minutes of the Accessibility Subgroup meeting.

Public Comment: Mike Rothrock said that considering the drafting definition from ADA is good, and suggested using Title 2 of the ADA. On the training issue, he and his wife will be doing training in their county and will focus on voting machine placement. He agreed that the training of poll workers should be mandatory and tied to the disbursement of money. He also listed several corrections to the election division brochure on accessibility. (1) Change 13 feet to 16 feet wide for a parking spot. (2) Add a TDD number. (3) Use "citizens with disability." (4) Change the first sentence under parking to "Each precinct needs to have at least one space accessible for people with a disability."

Kristi indicated her appreciation for the comments and that she would note the suggestions for the brochure's next draft.

Julia Vaughn pointed out that all of the subgroup members had received a packet from Count Us In which included several helpful brochures. She addressed the survey and said that all of the

counties need to be on the same page. She also indicated that a member of the local community with disabilities should participate in every step of the process, including, developing the survey, performing the survey and making the changes. However, she pointed out that it could be difficult to find someone in all of the rural areas. Finally, she told the subgroup not to assume that all public buildings are accessible because they are not and the central polling place for each county is not necessarily accessible either. The documents that Julia handed out are part of the record and are available to anyone who would like to see them.

Next week's agenda will include setting forth the priorities, and what we would like to bring out of the committee. Also the subgroup will review and discuss the draft. **Todd will also call Tom Gallager and ask him to make a presentation.**

The next meeting of the Accessibility Subgroup will be March 21, 2003 at 1:00 p.m.